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***NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY***

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**The Lone Wolf Threat: A Different Approach**

**by**

**James M. Holder**

***Lieutenant Colonel, United States Air Force***

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# **The Lone Wolf Threat: A Different Approach**

**by James M. Holder**

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**A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Joint Advanced Warfighting School in partial satisfaction of the requirements of a Master of Science Degree in Joint Campaign Planning and Strategy. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Joint Forces Staff College or the Department of Defense.**

**This paper is entirely my own work except as documented in footnotes. (or appropriate statement per the Academic Integrity Policy)**


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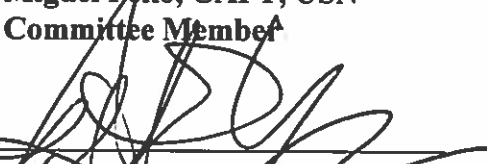
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## **ABSTRACT**

In the last quarter century, domestic and international terrorism has arrived on the home front of the United States. However, there is an emergent aspect to the terrorism threat that is rearing its head and that is the danger of the “Lone Wolf.” This thesis will introduce the lone wolf as a potential strategic actor, identify both environmental and personal key factors useful in profiling the potential lone wolf and create a better understanding to the origination, development, and finally, intent to act violently. In developing a methodology and analytical model to combat this asymmetric and almost undetectable terrorist, four case studies are examined of lone wolf terrorism: Theodore Kaczynski, Timothy McVeigh, Nidal Malik Hasan, and Mohammad Youssef Abdulazeez. From these case studies, and using the maturation of radical intent methodology presented, an analytical model with trigger points are revealed where the lone wolf can become visible and a Golden Moment is identified in which intelligence communities and law enforcement agencies can employ asymmetric strategic approaches to aid in tracking, deterring, and interdicting the lone wolf terrorist prior to an attack.

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this thesis to the men and women of the United States armed forces, who have fought and sacrificed greatly in defense of this great nation. One of my favorite quotes of “Some Gave All, But All Gave Some” speaks to the sacrifice that all have made, including the families and loved ones. The nation owes these men, women, and children a debt of gratitude that will never be paid in full. This is just a small tribute to my brothers and sisters past and present, and to the future selfless patriots who will follow in our footsteps and will “support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic.”

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I would like to offer my sincerest appreciation to my thesis advisor, Dr. Keith Dickson. His guidance, direction and counsel on this project were invaluable, along with his patience as I worked through the process.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The United States is currently in a battle on its home front against an asymmetric and almost undetectable enemy. What many leaders, in both military and civil entities believed, or hoped, were isolated attacks instead became a viable and unpredictable threat. This threat manifested itself predominantly in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and, if the first 16 years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are any indication, the threat will continue to grow and have strategic impact if allowed to continue unimpeded. This menace can be categorized by many names such as non-state actor or leaderless resistance. For the purpose of this paper, it is termed the “Lone Wolf” terrorist.

President Obama, in an interview with Wolf Blitzer of CNN in 2011, listed lone wolf terrorism as his biggest security concern.<sup>1</sup> While also highlighting advances in combating terrorism and concern about a major terrorist operation such as 9/11, President Obama clearly emphasized that the single-actor or lone wolf terrorist as the most likely to occur and unfortunately, the most difficult to interdict. This creates a security dilemma in which there is no clear-cut solution.

### The Lone Wolf

While many researchers provide definitions of lone wolf terrorism, Ramon Spaaij’s definition provides particular clarity. He defines lone wolf terrorism as “terrorist attacks carried out by persons who (a) operates individually, (b) does not belong to an organized terrorist group or network, and (c) whose *modi operandi* is conceived and

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<sup>1</sup> CNN, “Obama: Biggest terror fear is the lone wolf,” <http://security.blogs.cnn.com/2011/08/16/obama-biggest-terror-fear-is-the-lone-wolf/> (accessed November 4, 2015)

directed by the individual without any direct outside command or hierarchy”<sup>2</sup> This helps define the difference between individual and group terrorism. Secondly, it would be helpful to define what terrorism is. The DoD defines it as, “The unlawful use of violence or threat of violence to instill fear and coerce governments or societies. Terrorism is often motivated by religious, political, or other ideological beliefs and committed in the pursuit of goals that are usually political.”<sup>3</sup> The Federal Bureau of Investigation defines terrorism as "the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives."<sup>4</sup> Lastly, the State Department offers its definition in Title 22 of the U.S. Code, Chapter 38, Section 2656f(d)(2): "Premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents."<sup>5</sup> The common elements among these definitions are calculated and unlawful violence that instills fear in a society and is motivated by goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological. All of these elements define the lone wolf as a subset of larger terrorist type activities.

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<sup>2</sup> Ramon Spaaij, “The Enigma of Lone Wolf Terrorism: An Assessment,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* Vol. 33, No. 9 (2010): 856, <http://ramonspaaij.nl/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/Spaaij-Lone-Wolf-Terrorism.pdf> (accessed November 4, 2015).

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Education and Doctrine Division, J-7, “*DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*,” (October 15, 2015), [http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/dod\\_dictionary/](http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/dod_dictionary/) (accessed January 5, 2016).

<sup>4</sup> The Federal Bureau of Investigation, “*What We Investigate*,” <http://www.fbi.gov/albuquerque/about-us/what-we-investigate> (accessed January 5, 2016).

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of State, “*Country Reports on Terrorism 2011*,” (July 31, 2015), <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2011/index.htm> (accessed January 5, 2016).

## Framing the Thesis

In recent years, the homegrown lone wolf terrorist emerged as a significant threat to U.S. national interests. Recent attacks, both domestically and internationally, have demonstrated that the lone wolf is now a standard part of threats to state security. While this menace will never be completely eradicated, a different approach is needed to help identify and assist in interdicting the lone wolf prior to an attack.

This thesis offers no clear cut solution to the domestic lone wolf threat. There are already many efforts and initiatives, within both intelligence communities and law enforcement agencies, that are attempting to interdict the lone wolf terrorist. In 2001, former President George W. Bush signed the USA PATRIOT Act into law.<sup>6</sup> After a four year extension was signed in 2011, the USA PATRIOT Act expired on June 1, 2015. However, the USA FREEDOM Act<sup>7</sup>, signed into law on June 2, 2015, allows for the continuation of collection efforts in the fight against terrorism. However, this act allows more transparency in governmental collection techniques to restore public trust, requiring new and emerging Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTPs) to be developed and employed to counter this threat. This thesis offers a new potential tactic, or a different approach, to the lone wolf threat.

In this thesis, Chapter Two introduces the lone wolf as a strategic actor. Chapter Three introduces the common key factors of the lone wolf and Chapter Four offers a methodology that identifies three distinct stages of lone wolf activity. Chapter Five will then present four case studies which are identified as lone wolf terrorism in the U.S. and

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<sup>6</sup> U.S.A. P.A.T.R.I.O.T. is a backronym that stands for “Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism.”

<sup>7</sup> U.S.A. F.R.E.E.D.O.M. is also a backronym standing for “Uniting and Strengthening America by Fulfilling Rights and Ending Eavesdropping, Dragnet-collection and Online Monitoring.”

with the benefit of hindsight, apply the methodology of action to each study. Chapter Six will present an analytical model used on the methodology of action to assess and potentially identify, deter, and if necessary and possible, interdict a lone wolf terrorist prior to an attack. This analytical model reveals the three stages of lone wolf activity in the maturation of radical intent which can be used to determine a Golden Moment that can identify, deter, or interdict the lone wolf. Lastly, Chapter Seven will discuss strategic asymmetric approaches to combat the threat of the lone wolf and apply these approaches to the methodology and model presented in this thesis.

## CHAPTER 2: THE LONE WOLF THREAT

In the current security environment, combating the lone wolf threat is a tenuous proposition. What differentiates a lone wolf from an ordinary criminal? Is the individual simply trying to draw attention to himself, or to influence someone, as John Hinckley did in 1981 by shooting President Ronald Reagan? Mental illness such as paranoia or schizophrenia, can lead to violent criminal acts as well. To distinguish lone wolf terrorism from an isolated criminal act, the lone wolf must be characterized as a sane, calculating individual attempting to further a personal, political agenda and is planning and executing his actions without any outside command influence or hierarchy.

As lone wolf attacks will likely become increasingly common in the near and future security environment, a better understanding of this particular threat is needed to fully grasp the radical maturation and motivations of the lone wolf, as well as to recognize, deter, or interdict the lone wolf before he takes action.

In their article *Asymmetry and U.S. Military Strategy: Definition, Background, and Strategic Concepts*, Steven Metz and Douglas V. Johnson II identify two dimensions of asymmetry: *positive* and *negative*.<sup>1</sup> They define *negative* asymmetry as a way that an adversary will exploit or attack a perceived weakness or vulnerability. It is, in other words, a form of threat. The lone wolf who meticulously plans and executes an attack is utilizing this type of negative asymmetry. This is why he will not attack a U.S. establishment that is expecting an attack or presents a high level of alert. Potential targets that operate in a sustained defensive or readiness posture, such as military installations,

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<sup>1</sup> Steven Metz and Douglas V. Johnson II, *Asymmetry and U.S. Military Strategy: Definition, Background, and Strategic Concepts*, Strategic Studies Institute, (U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA), 2001.

nuclear power plants, airports, etc. will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for a lone wolf to penetrate. A more viable target, but also particularly challenging would be major public events such as the Super Bowl or the Olympics. In these venues, security is heightened, but not all encompassing and preventative, as witnessed by the Boston Marathon Bombing in April 2013.

So what are potential lone wolf targets? The answer is, unfortunately, everything. There are nearly an unlimited number of targets presenting many levels of negative symmetry that the lone wolf could seek to attack. The choice of target is often related to the particular lone wolf's motivation. The nature of American society, its economy, and infrastructure have various levels of vulnerability that a lone wolf might exploit. For example, a lone wolf angry with U.S. troops in the Middle East and motivated by extremist religious ideology may attack a DoD entity that employs minimum security. While accessing a military base and carrying out an attack would prove almost impossible to an individual without military credentials, an attack on a military recruiting station or National Guard armory may prove more feasible and have similar effects. A lone wolf angry with perceived government interference could be motivated to attack a symbolic federal building or state government institution. A lone wolf seeking to inflict maximum casualties to affect the public morale could attack a negative symmetric target that is randomly chosen or simply the most easily accessible.

Additionally, seams exist between local, state, and federal law enforcement jurisdictions that the lone wolf can exploit. Security at high profile events or high payoff targets are well coordinated within law enforcement agencies. But a myriad of other

targets exist and are at varying levels of vulnerability based on the motivation and preparation of the lone wolf.

There are also seams between the intelligence community and law enforcement agencies. While it is easier for law enforcement agencies to share critical information with the intelligence community, the same is not true for the sharing of information from the intelligence community. There are different levels of classification, compartmentalized data, and the protection of sources predominant in intelligence communities. These also create seams the potential lone wolf either willfully or unknowingly exploits to his advantage.

Lastly, U.S. infrastructure is complex and interagency cooperation can be tenuous at times. Adaptability and flexibility to the current environment is crucial against this dynamic threat and the U.S. is lacking in this arena.

### A Strategic Threat

While most lone wolf targets are low-level tactical attacks, there is the very real possibility that the lone wolf has the potential to be a strategic actor posing a strategic threat. A strategic attack is one that would result in significant government policy shift or results in more than a 1,000 casualties.<sup>2</sup> The last successful strategic attack on U.S. homeland was 9/11 and to date, there have been no successful lone wolf attacks that rose to the strategic level. This absence of successful attacks does not imply there have not been attempts. Strategic level targets such as the Capitol, White House, and nuclear

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<sup>2</sup> Fred Burton and Scott Stewart, "Al Qaeda and the Strategic Threat to the U.S. Homeland," *STRATFOR Global Intelligence*, July 25, 2007, [https://www.stratfor.com/al\\_qaeda\\_and\\_strategic\\_threat\\_u\\_s\\_homeland](https://www.stratfor.com/al_qaeda_and_strategic_threat_u_s_homeland) (accessed November 16, 2015).



facilities have been targeted in the past, but successfully deterred or interdicted by law-enforcement agencies.

While leaders seem to hold the perception that the lone wolf will have difficulty successfully attacking a target of significant strategic impact, the potential threat still exists. The lone wolf does not have the resources that a terrorist organization might possess and, therefore, his likely sole source of strategic level impact would be mass casualties. Numbers of casualties approaching those mentioned above could cause a geopolitical policy shift that would be almost an impossible task for a lone wolf to achieve. But the lone wolf is not required to attack a strategic target to have a strategic impact. The Paris attacks on November 13, 2015 are a good example. While this was a coordinated attack by at least seven gunmen and suicide bombers, 130 civilians were killed and more than 360 wounded.<sup>3</sup> This is well below the threshold of 1,000 or more casualties, yet it had strategic effects on France. Paris, a European capital and center of Western culture and values, was attacked at the tactical level. For days, if not weeks, world attention was focused on this tragedy, leading French President François Hollande to declare that France was at war.<sup>4</sup> Attention was diverted from the recent aggressive actions of Russia and placed the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) center stage in Western geopolitical policy. Paris is an excellent example of such a strategic effect. Such an attack could be accomplished by a highly motivated and prepared lone wolf, and could achieve the same strategic effect.

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<sup>3</sup> For further reading and a timeline of the Paris, France attacks, see the article *2015 Paris Terror Attacks Fast Facts* on the CNN World Website. It is updated periodically as new information becomes available. <http://www.cnn.com/2015/12/08/europe/2015-paris-terror-attacks-fast-facts/index.html>

<sup>4</sup> Krishnadev Calamur, "Is France at War?", *The Atlantic*, November 16, 2015, <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/11/is-france-at-war-isis/416244/> (accessed December 6, 2015).

### CHAPTER 3: A PROFILE OF THE LONE WOLF: KEY FACTORS

Lone wolf behavior is always characterized by a combination of key factors. The influence of these key factors on the lone wolf will be examined through four case studies in Chapter Four. These factors are characterized as psychological, social, cognitive capacity, financial capacity, and demographic-cultural factors. This chapter takes a bottom-up approach to explore the physical and emotional nature of individuals who conduct a lone wolf terrorist act to develop a general profile.

#### Psychological

Psychological temperaments of the lone wolf are those atypical to broadly accepted behavior, such as aggressive or hostile tendencies, seeking vengeance, or showing a great sensitivity to oppression, self-destructive behavior, paranoia, or identity seeking. The best description of lone wolf aberrant psychological behavior is described as antisocial personality disorder (APD). The American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual on Mental Disorders, fourth edition (DSM-IV)* defines APD as "a pervasive pattern of disregard for, and violation of, the rights of others that begins in childhood or early adolescence and continues into adulthood." Individuals with antisocial personality disorder may disregard social norms and laws, repeatedly lie, place others at risk for their own benefit, and demonstrate a profound lack of remorse. It is sometimes referred to as sociopathic personality disorder, or sociopathy.<sup>1</sup> Conversely, someone who is insane or is a psychopath is mentally disturbed and does not know right

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<sup>1</sup> National Institute of Mental Health, "Antisocial Personality Disorder," National Institute of Health, <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/prevalence/antisocial-personality-disorder.shtml> (accessed December 6, 2015).

from wrong. The lone wolf with APD clearly understands right from wrong, yet chooses wrong for a multitude of reasons with no pangs of conscience that his actions might cause in human suffering.

### Social

Social aspects include the structure of the lone wolf's relationships with family, friends, and co-workers and whether those relationships can be considered prosocial or antisocial. Prosocial behavior is voluntary behavior intended to benefit another, such as assisting, sharing, and comforting others. For the lone wolf, antisocial behaviors manifest themselves as disruptive acts characterized by covert and overt hostility and intentional aggression toward others.

Several questions arise from this type of behavior: Is the potential lone wolf a true loner, or does he interact with others? What is the basis of those relationships? Is he vulnerable to a charismatic influence? Is the potential lone wolf a leader or a follower? These questions help reveal whether the individual is emotionally healthy, or potentially an individual capable of taking some sort of violent action.

### Cognitive Capacity

The potential lone wolf must have the intellectual wherewithal to progress through the maturation of radical intent without calling undue attention to himself and alerting authorities. If he has decided to take action and conduct an attack, in order to be successful, he must have the mental capacity to gather his resources, plan, and execute his attack. He must account for existing security measures in place at his intended target

and have a reasonable and actionable plan to circumnavigate those measures. His subsequent bid to escape and avoid capture must also be considered.

### Financial Capacity

The lone wolf's financial situation is also worthy of consideration. If he does not have adequate financial resources, then there is little chance that he can execute an attack. The ability to travel and purchase required materials anonymously usually requires a substantial amount of money and time. Similar to the drug trade, these types of covert transactions usually require cash. He must also be able to support and sustain himself while planning the attack, no matter the duration required to complete it.

### Demographic-Cultural Factors

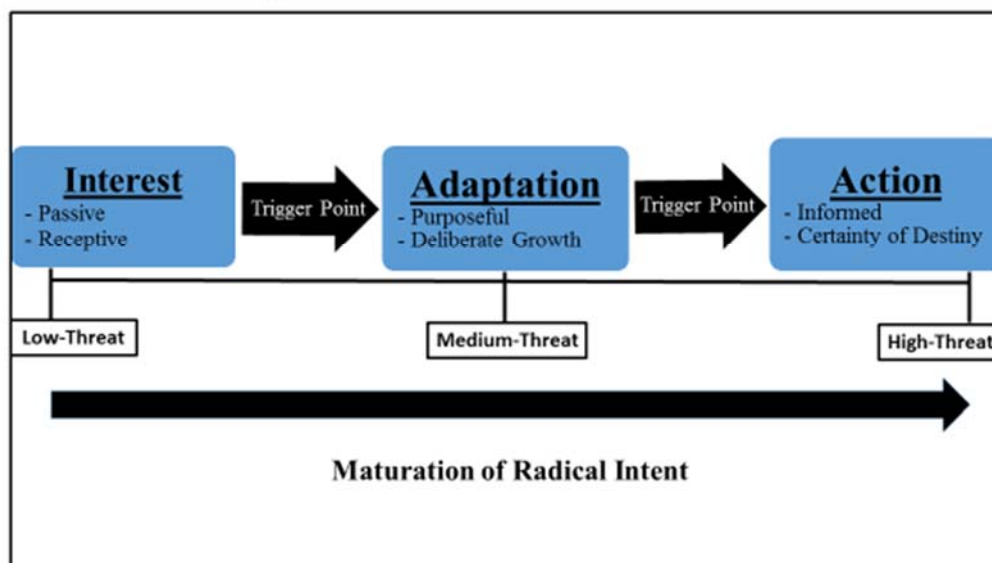
Much like social factors, the demographic and cultural environment which the potential lone wolf is exposed to will have both positive and negative effects. The physical demographic environment in which he finds himself will ultimately determine if he finds himself as an outsider or a loner. If he does not feel a connection as a valued member of a social group, this disconnection can lead to withdrawal and further feelings of isolation. Due to many factors such as employment, language, religion, and housing opportunities, an individual may find himself in an environment with no familiar support structure. The same aspects apply in the cultural sense. Immigrants or refugees settling in a foreign country, who possess the aberrations listed above, may seek a violent outlet to satisfy feelings of disconnection.

In summary, these key factors reveal a pattern of discontent and a sense of forced exclusion from being a productive member of American society. Feelings of being an outsider and a loner are crucial elements in the progression of an individual's decision to commit violence. In the next chapter, a model will be presented that demonstrates this evolution to violent action, or the maturation of radical intent.

## **CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY OF LONE WOLF ACTIVITY**

As discussed in the previous chapter, there are key factors that shape the lone wolf. These factors combined with external influences and life events can lead to personal triggers that propel the lone wolf through three stages of activity: An Interest stage, an Adaptation stage, and finally an Action stage. Simultaneously, there is a process designated as the maturation of radical intent model that leads the lone wolf to a trigger point and thus prompts advancement to the next stage. These trigger points can be any particular circumstance or situation that deeply affects the lone wolf. It can be personal in nature such as the death of a loved one or more broad such as U.S. foreign policy in regards to an area where the lone wolf is sensitive. These trigger points vary from individual to individual, but common underlying themes emerge that demonstrate the process of the maturation of radical intent across different cases. The methodology represents a process and presents these stages in order from lowest to highest threat to illustrate how an individual can become a lone wolf terrorist who takes some sort of violent action. The escalation through the maturation of radical intent, however, may not always be chronological, it is still useful to identify the key stages an individual progresses through before violence is imminent (illustrated in Figure 1).

## Stages of Lone Wolf Activity



**Figure 1. Stages of Lone Wolf Activity**

In the first, or Interest stage, the potential lone wolf is exhibiting a curiosity into an area of interest that can be defined as subversive. This could be a radical ideology, grievances against a government entity or employer, or an interest in anarchy, or hostility to democratic society. The interest is usually receptive in nature and can also be drawn from social media (blogs, etc.), or internet sites, attending meetings, or simply through conversation with sympathetic friends and coworkers. This stage falls into the low-level threat category as this interest may be just that, a curiosity that will go no further and no trigger point will be reached. It can be assumed that many potential lone wolf attackers exist, but they remain at the Interest stage on the model and never move beyond the passivity that characterizes it. However, a trigger point may occur that moves the individual into a more committed frame of mind and into the second, or Adaptation stage.

In the Adaptation stage, the potential lone wolf moved past interest and is purposefully and deliberately changing his outlook on his world. He is responding to the various stimuli he has exposed himself to, and has become a source of motivation. He

changes mood, manner, habits, clothing, food, speech as external manifestations of adaptation. He may turn to writing privately, or become active in social media reflecting the ideas he encountered in the Interest stage. He is much more informed and certain of both his actions and his perceived destiny. This stage is highlighted by danger and reflects a level of motivation that manifests itself in specific and revealing actions, such as the purchase of and experimentation with explosive materials or weapons, and casual, happenstance reconnaissance of potential targets. Again, the potential lone wolf can remain at this stage indefinitely. An external event then triggers the individual to move from the Adaptation to the Action stage.

In the Action stage, the individual has become a lone wolf and is actively seeking a target and planning an attack. He is informed and immersed in his source of radicalization and has a realistic certainty of the destiny awaiting him. Here the lone wolf is doing reconnaissance of potential targets, rigging explosives, drawing up plans, conducting rehearsals and perhaps authoring a manifesto. At stage three, the lone wolf is far more visible due to his probable open movement in reconnaissance of a target and purchasing of necessary materials. However, if not detected until this stage, he is much harder to interdict.

These three stages of lone wolf activity along with the maturation of radical intent methodology is crucial to identifying, deterring, and interdicting the lone wolf prior to an attack. In the next chapter and with the benefit of hindsight, four lone wolf case studies will be examined which will demonstrate that utilizing the methodology, law enforcement agencies can identify, deter, and interdict the lone wolf to prevent a domestic lone wolf terrorist attack.



## CHAPTER 5: LONE WOLF ACTORS / ATTACKS ASSESSMENTS

This chapter examines four case studies of lone wolf terrorism in the United States. Examined are Theodore Kaczynski, Timothy McVeigh; Nidal Malik Hasan, and Mohammad Youssef Abdulazeez. Each of the individuals meets the definition of a lone wolf provided in this thesis. Each individual will be introduced and examined through the key factors that define the lone wolf (psychology, social, cognitive capacity, financial capacity, and demographic-cultural factors). Each individual will then be tracked through the three stages of lone wolf activity and trigger points that trace maturation of radical intent culminating in a single act (or acts) of terroristic violence.

### Case Study 1: Theodore Kaczynski

Theodore Kaczynski, also known as the Unabomber,<sup>1</sup> operated individually and carried out his attacks with no outside command or hierarchy guiding him. Between 1978 and 1995, he mailed or delivered thirteen bombs that killed three people and seriously injured many others.<sup>2</sup> Up until 1993, he remained anonymous and mute. In 1995, he began writing letters to newspapers, magazines, and even to some of his victims.<sup>3</sup> He subsequently produced a widely published 35,000 word manifesto. His brother recognized his writing style and supplied his name to the FBI, who arrested

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<sup>1</sup> "Unabomber" was a moniker created by the media after a bomb exploded on an American Airlines flight in 1979 and the next year at the home of the president of United Airlines. Federal investigators organized the UNABOM (standing for UNiversity and Airline BOMbing) task force.

<sup>2</sup> Encyclopedia.com, "Unabomber Case and Trial," World of Forensic Science, <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G2-3448300578.html> (accessed November 08, 2015).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

Kaczynski in 1996. He pled guilty to all indictments against him and was sentenced to life in prison with no chance of parole.<sup>4</sup>

### **Psychological**

By all accounts, Theodore Kaczynski was a troubled man. During his trial, a number of psychiatrists, working on behalf of the defense, diagnosed him with severe mental illness, namely paranoid schizophrenia.<sup>5</sup> His mother and brother backed this assessment, but possibly as a ploy to spare him from the death penalty. However, psychiatrists for the prosecution pointed to his manifesto as proof of his sanity, even genius. Regardless, Kaczynski demonstrated aggressive and hostile behavior and a vengeful view towards technology and an industrial society.

### **Social**

Socially, Kaczynski was perceived as awkward and an outsider. Kaczynski excelled academically and pushed himself to graduate early and was rewarded with being accepted to Harvard at the age of sixteen. Once there however, he never fit in with the snobbish cliques that were pervasive at the Ivy League school. A classmate of his testified that Kaczynski was “sloppy,” owned only a couple pairs of slacks and a few shirts.<sup>6</sup> He continued to be an outsider and made few friends in the freshman dorm. His sense of isolation remained with him into his adult life.

### **Cognitive Capacity**

There is no question of Kaczynski’s intelligence and cognitive capacity. He was tested in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade and determined to have an IQ of 167, enabling him to skip the 6<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Alston Chase, “Harvard and the Making of the Unabomber,” *The Atlantic*, June 2000, <http://www.theatlantic.com/past/docs/issues/2000/06/chase.htm> (accessed October 28, 2015).

and 11<sup>th</sup> grade.<sup>7</sup> After Harvard he completed his master's and Ph.D. degrees in mathematics by age 25, and taught mathematics for two years at the University of California at Berkeley, becoming the youngest Assistant Professor ever hired at that institution.<sup>8</sup> He exhibited traits of genius in his ability to remain anonymous, yet effective, in the manufacture and delivery of his bombs, utilizing simplistic materials such as rubber bands, nails, lead, ammonium nitrate, and aluminum powder available almost everywhere.<sup>9</sup> His improvised devices were innocuous and common in appearance, such as a three-ring binder.<sup>10</sup> Even though law enforcement officials used every forensic technique possible to discover the Unabomber's identity, Kaczynski eluded detection and capture, further demonstrating his high intelligence.

### **Financial Capacity**

There is little information found on Kaczynski's finances. He came from a middle class family and held a job as a university professor. When he later became a recluse in a cabin in the woods of Montana, he subsisted as a hermit and had no real expenses. His financial resources were certainly adequate for his ingenious collection of inexpensive materials to manufacture and mail his deadly parcels.

### **Demographic-Cultural Factors**

Kaczynski's demographic, cultural, and political leanings were obviously influenced by his upbringing and experiences in both high school and college. Already small for his age and now two years younger than his classmates, Kaczynski was a

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Encyclopedia.com, "Unabomber Case and Trial," World of Forensic Science, <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G2-3448300578.html> (accessed November 08, 2015).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

teacher's pet due to his academic prowess. His high school became integrated in 1954 and while his neighborhood was adamantly against integration, the Kaczynski's were viewed as liberal on race matters, contributing to his feelings of isolation.<sup>11</sup>

### **Trigger Points**

By 1969, Kaczynski was struggling at Berkeley. His lectures were difficult to understand and he avoided necessary interaction with his students. He soon resigned his assistant professorship and by the early 1970s had given up his academic pursuits and settled in Montana. He built a small cabin near Lincoln, where he lived in near-total isolation, hunting rabbits, growing vegetables, and spending much of his time reading.<sup>12</sup>

It is during this time that Kaczynski entered the Interest stage of a potential lone wolf.

While living this remote, survivalist lifestyle, Kaczynski developed his own anti-government and anti-technology philosophy. He railed against technology, modernity, and the destruction of the environment. Kaczynski stated that the continued scientific and technical progress of society would inevitably result in the extinction of individual liberty.<sup>13</sup>

By 1973, Kaczynski seemed content in his solitude the previous four years. However, another trigger point was reached when the commercial and residential development of land nearby affected his ability to live in complete isolation. This new development prompted his first plan of attack, when he started targeting "societal progress."<sup>14</sup> This last trigger point moved Kaczynski from the Interest stage into the

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<sup>11</sup> Alston Chase, "Harvard and the Making of the Unabomber," *The Atlantic*, June 2000, <http://www.theatlantic.com/past/docs/issues/2000/06/chase.htm> (accessed October 28, 2015).

<sup>12</sup> Biography.com, "Ted Kaczynski Biography," <http://www.biography.com/people/ted-kaczynski-578450#college-education> (accessed October 28, 2015).

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Crime Museum, "Ted Kaczynski: The Unabomber," <http://www.crimemuseum.org/crime-library/ted-kaczynski-the-unabomber> (accessed October 28, 2015).

Adaptation and Action stages as he soon began procuring resources, experimenting with different explosive compounds, and manufacturing his initial crude bombs. By 1978, he was fully into the Action stage and began his deadly mail bombing campaign that lasted for the next seventeen years.

### **Summary**

Identifying and interdicting Kaczynski would have proved impossible prior to his bombing campaign. His operation in solitude, high intelligence, and means to support himself allowed him to live in anonymity and never raised his profile while progressing along the maturation of radical intent model. Even during his seventeen years of lone wolf terror bombing, law enforcement agencies were no closer to catching him. It was not until he wrote and disseminated his manifesto that he raised his profile and vulnerability which led to his capture.

### **Case Study 2: Timothy McVeigh**

On April 19, 1995, Timothy McVeigh parked a truck bomb at the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in downtown Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.<sup>15</sup> One-third of the building was demolished and 168 people were killed, including 19 children.<sup>16</sup> Four years after his conviction, McVeigh was executed by lethal injection on June 11, 2001, at the Federal Correctional Complex in Terre Haute, Indiana.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> For more info on Timothy McVeigh and the Oklahoma City bombings, See the book *Patriots, Politics, and the Oklahoma City Bombing* by Stuart A. Wright.

<sup>16</sup> The Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Terror Hits Home: The Oklahoma City Bombing," <https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/history/famous-cases/oklahoma-city-bombing> (accessed November 4, 2015).

<sup>17</sup> Rita Cosby, "Timothy McVeigh Put to Death for Oklahoma City Bombings," *Fox News*, June 12, 2001, <http://www.foxnews.com/story/2001/06/12/timothy-mcveigh-put-to-death-for-oklahoma-city-bombings.html> (accessed October 28, 2015).

While some may argue that McVeigh was not a true lone wolf, because other co-conspirators were involved, McVeigh was the leading actor. The lone wolf factor was exemplified by McVeigh himself when he was asked about the kind of assistance he obtained from others, he simply said, "I blew up the Murrah Building and isn't it kind of scary that one man could wreak this kind of hell?"<sup>18</sup> During his trial, McVeigh barely acknowledged the roles of his two co-conspirators and insisted that he receive full credit for his criminal act. McVeigh thus meets the definition of a lone wolf for the purposes of this case study.

### **Psychological**

There is little argument that McVeigh was an angry man. Bullied at school, he believed the U.S. government was the biggest bully of all that threatened the individual rights of American citizens. He wrote letters to congressmen and to local newspapers, complaining bitterly about government intrusion into the private lives of citizens. Further fueling his anger, he saw current events such as the Ruby Ridge siege in Idaho and the Branch Davidian compound attack in Waco, Texas, detailed later in this chapter, as a sign of government clampdown on individual rights with more restrictions and intrusions to come.

### **Social**

Like Kaczynski, McVeigh's thoughts and ideas diverged from those of his family and friends, and not understood by those closest to him, led him into mental isolation. Unlike Kaczynski, who remained in a stationary physical isolation in his cabin in

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<sup>18</sup> Jo Thomas, "'No Sympathy' for Dead Children, McVeigh Says," *The New York Times*, March 29, 2001, <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/03/29/us/no-sympathy-for-dead-children-mcveigh-says.html> (accessed October 28, 2015).

Montana, McVeigh restlessly roamed the country looking for direction and those with the same ideology. During this transitory time of his life, his ideas and thoughts were formed in emotional isolation with no one close to reasonably argue or bound his ideations and passion. It was this isolation that enabled him to perfect his twisted views of governmental intrusion without the inconvenient realities of more rational deliberation with others.

### **Cognitive Capacity**

McVeigh was described as a bright student in high school. While not at the top of his class, he was capable enough to be accepted into college, but later dropped out. McVeigh also authored many articles from prison and was lucid and articulate during his trial and post-conviction interviews. Additionally, he was able to procure the necessary materials, conduct research, carefully select and reconnoiter his target, and developed a detailed escape plan. He successfully followed his escape plans until stopped by a highway trooper for a missing license plate. Arrested for having a concealed weapon, he was not tied to the Murrah building bombing until three days later, while still in jail.

### **Financial Capacity**

McVeigh was not destitute by any means. He was by all indications self-supporting, and readily found employment when required. He was able to travel and purchase required materials and components when and where he needed them.

### **Demographic-Cultural Factors**

The demographic and cultural landscape in which McVeigh found himself was unremarkable. He came from a middle-class family and although his mother and two sisters left home when he was ten, he opted to stay at home so his father would not have

to live alone. During his formative years at school, he was shy and somewhat socially awkward, but experienced a seemingly ordinary existence in the life of a young American male.

### **Trigger Points**

McVeigh entered the Interest stage soon after dropping out of college and suffering through a progression of dead-end jobs. He became an avid reader of right-wing, pro-militia magazines like *Soldier of Fortune* and soon became a self-described survivalist.<sup>19</sup> Already a collector of guns, with a growing anti-government sentiment, McVeigh encountered another trigger point, reading *The Turner Diaries*, a racist, anti-Semitic novel telling the story of a gun enthusiast who reacts against governmental gun laws by packing a van with homemade explosives and blowing up the FBI headquarters in Washington, to start a revolution. This book had a profound effect on McVeigh, which implanted an ideation fixation that instilled the drive necessary to achieve the Adaptation stage.

In 1988, shortly after reading *The Turner Diaries*, McVeigh and a friend purchased ten acres of wooded land where they began stockpiling food, water, and ammunition. They had designs to also build a bunker on the property but finances were dwindling. McVeigh joined the Army for a steady income, but to also improve his survival and marksmanship skills.<sup>20</sup>

In the Army, McVeigh was described as a model soldier in the infantry and saw combat in Iraq during Operation DESERT STORM. McVeigh performed so well as a

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<sup>19</sup> The Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Terror Hits Home: The Oklahoma City Bombing," <https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/history/famous-cases/oklahoma-city-bombing> (accessed November 4, 2015).

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.



soldier he was selected to try out for the Green Berets but could not pass the initial physical fitness screening. This failure played on the existing social isolation and growing anti-government sentiment McVeigh presently harbored. Disillusioned, he returned to his regular Army unit, chose not to reenlist, and was granted an Honorable Discharge.

In the immediate years following his discharge, McVeigh experienced the last and most influential trigger point: The Ruby Ridge siege in Idaho and the Branch Davidian compound attack in Waco, Texas. In both incidents, federal agents took extreme measures, resulting in a number of deaths of innocent people. McVeigh even visited Waco during the siege and was horrified to see the compound engulfed in flames. Easily identified as the last trigger point, and already seething with rage at the U.S. government, this perceived abuse of governmental power drove McVeigh into the Action stage and after two years of planning and preparing, McVeigh destroyed the Murrah Federal building on the two year anniversary of the violent climax of the Waco siege.

McVeigh stated publically numerous times, and also during his trial, that his attack was in retaliation for the U.S. government's siege in Waco<sup>21</sup> and Ruby Ridge.<sup>22</sup> These two incidents involved many of the same federal agencies, including the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms and the FBI's Hostage Rescue Team (HRT). An HRT sniper, Lon Horiuchi, was involved in both incidents, was charged (later dropped) with

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<sup>21</sup> The Waco siege was a siege of a compound belonging to the religious group Branch Davidians by American federal and Texas state law enforcement and US military between February 28 and April 19, 1993. The group was suspected of weapons violations so an arrest warrant was served. Seventy-six people died at the culmination of the siege, including women and children.

<sup>22</sup> Ruby Ridge was the site of a deadly confrontation and siege in northern Idaho in 1992 between Randy Weaver, his family, and his friend Kevin Harris and agents of the United States Marshals Service (USMS) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). The events resulted in the death of Weaver's son, his wife, Vicki, and Deputy U.S. Marshal.

involuntary manslaughter in the killing of Vicki Weaver, whom he mistakenly shot during the Ruby Ridge standoff. Horiuchi's involvement fanned anti-government rhetoric and sparked radicalization among militia personnel. McVeigh himself stated that he considered killing Horiuchi, but later decided to bomb the Murrah building instead because he believed that federal agents had become soldiers and he felt an attack against a "command center" such as the Murrah building would have a bigger effect.<sup>23</sup>

### **Summary**

Different from the Unabomber, who operated in solitude, McVeigh exhibited signs of radicalization witnessed by his friends and co-workers alike. With hindsight, the maturation of radical intent he exhibited was obvious and should have been apparent to those that knew and interacted with him. He visited the Waco site during the siege and interviewed by local reporters. He was a well-known individual in the gun show circuit and travelled cross country to the exhibits. He even traveled to Gulfport, Mississippi to investigate rumors that the U.N. was equipping a global army. Timothy McVeigh's progression through the three stages provides a very vivid example of the maturation of radical intent model.

### **Case Study 3: Nidal Malik Hasan**

On Nov. 5, 2009, Major Hasan, a United States Army psychiatrist in the Medical Corps, opened fire on soldiers at a medical clinic at Fort Hood, killing thirteen and injuring more than 30 others while they were accomplishing medical checkups in

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<sup>23</sup> The Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Terror Hits Home: The Oklahoma City Bombing," <https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/history/famous-cases/oklahoma-city-bombing> (accessed November 4, 2015).

preparation for deployment to Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>24</sup> Currently incarcerated at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, Hasan is awaiting execution. Hasan may be the latest example of an increasingly common type of lone wolf terrorist, one who has been self-radicalized with the help of the internet. Hasan is a lone wolf driven by religious extremism, attacking fellow soldiers he had come to view as the enemy.

### **Psychological**

The psychological assessment of Hasan is complex. One argument is he was a loner and a misfit, who cracked when ordered to the very war zone that had caused so many of the horrific emotional and physical wounds he had been treating over six years. His perpetual interaction with these psychological victims may have contributed to his own psychological breakdown. This explanation is challenged by Hasan's association with a charismatic imam at his mosque, who encouraged him toward the maturation of radical intent that ultimately led in his murderous attack.

### **Social**

Hasan was born in Virginia to Palestinian parents who immigrated to the U.S. from al-Bireh in the West Bank.<sup>25</sup> Raised as a Muslim, Hasan and his siblings helped their parents run the family's restaurant. Their father died in 1998 and their mother in 2001. Deeply distraught at the death of his mother, Hasan began attending the Dar al-Hijrah mosque in northern Virginia where he developed a relationship with the imam, Anwar al-Awlaki. Imam al-Awlaki was considered a moderate at that time and lectured to senior DoD and U.S. officials about Islam after 9/11. However, al-Awlaki either

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<sup>24</sup> James C. McKinley Jr. and James Dao, "Fort Hood Gunman Gave Signals Before His Rampage," *The New York Times*, November 8, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/09/us/09reconstruct.html?pagewanted=all> (accessed December 9, 2015).

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

masked his true beliefs or subsequently became radicalized, as he later encouraged and endorsed numerous terror attacks against the U.S. and abroad. After fleeing the U.S. in 2002, Al-Awlaki became the first U.S. citizen targeted and killed in a drone strike on September 30, 2011 in Yemen. Prior to his death, al-Awlaki and Hasan corresponded 10-20 times via email. Hasan's association with al-Awlaki raised his profile and Army officials as well as the FBI conducted investigations. The investigators concluded that the correspondence was consistent with research that Hasan claimed he was conducting and no further action was taken.<sup>26</sup>

### **Cognitive Capacity**

Hasan graduated from Virginia Tech with a degree in Biochemistry in 1997. He later gained admission to medical school at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS), earning his medical degree in 2003. In 2009, he earned a Master's degree from USUHS in Public Health. There is no question that he possessed the intelligence to meet the academic requirements of his three degrees. He carefully planned, prepared, and executed his attack. He was found sane and mentally competent at his trial.

### **Financial Capacity**

Hasan had the financial means as a U.S. Army Major not only to support himself throughout his maturation of radical intent, but also to procure the weapon and

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<sup>26</sup> Ethan Sacks, "Who is Anwar al-Awlaki? Imam contacted by Fort Hood gunman Nidal Malik Hasan has long radical past," *Daily News*, November 11, 2009, <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/anwar-al-awlaki-imam-contacted-fort-hood-gunman-nidal-malik-hasan-long-radical-article-1.417328> (accessed December 10, 2015).

ammunition needed for his attack. The time and expenses necessary to support his radicalization and arming himself were modest.

### **Demographic-Cultural Factors**

Hasan was distressed by the demographic environment he found himself in. As a member of the U.S. military, he was conflicted about his participation in a mission that he neither supported nor wished to contribute. Hasan had reportedly expressed anti-American views during briefings that he conducted and also in personal discussions with his peers and co-workers. As part of a graduate class, he authored a paper positing that the war on terror was actually a war against Islam and he commented that Islam should rise up against the aggressor. Hasan also emailed his superiors expressing concern about the actions of some of the soldiers he was evaluating. All of this points to a man who had obviously become an outsider and openly expressed his hostility.

### **Trigger Points**

Hasan appeared to enter the Interest stage soon after the death of his mother in 2001. Up until her death, family members described Hasan as a peaceful person and a good American. After her death, he became a much more devout Muslim and began attending the Dar al-Hijrah mosque and met the charismatic al-Awlaki. Under the imam's influence, Hasan developed his anti-American sentiment as he felt the war on terror was actually covert aggression against his newly discovered religious ideology.

As Hasan continued to treat soldiers returning from combat zones and listening to their most intimate feelings and prejudices, his ideological radicalization continued along the maturation of radical intent. He became more vocal in his condemnations of U.S. involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq. His emails with al-Awlaki continued and even

though dismissed by agents investigating him, the fact that he was now in the Adaptation stage was overlooked. Soon two additional trigger events would only further his anger and push him into the next and last stage.

Hasan received orders to deploy to Afghanistan within a month. These orders were obviously upsetting to him. He was being deployed to the very combat zone where he had heard so many horrifying stories and he would be that much closer to fighting, in his view, his Muslim brothers. Secondly, and just days prior to his attack, Hasan contacted his supervisor and Army legal advisers seeking advice regarding how to handle reports of soldier's deeds in Afghanistan and Iraq that he felt were possible war crimes. Already angry and upset with the possibility of fighting those he most identified with in his faith coupled with his perceptions of war atrocities served as the final trigger and thrust him into the Action stage.

### **Summary**

While Hasan did not demonstrate obvious overt indications that he was planning an attack such as research into capabilities, he did demonstrate that he was heavily in the adaptation stage and was becoming more and more radicalized. His assertions that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were actually wars against Islam and his correspondence with radical Islam leaders and handing out business cards that where he identified himself as a SoA (Soldier of Allah) suggested an increased association with a political identity that required an attack. Like McVeigh, Hasan overtly displayed all the stages of the maturation of radical intent model.

#### Case Study 4: Mohammad Youssef Abdulazeez

On July 16, 2015, Mohammad Youssef Abdulazeez shot and killed four U.S. Marines and a Navy Sailor at an Armed Forces Recruitment Center and a Navy depot in Chattanooga, Tennessee. He was subsequently shot and killed by responding law enforcement officers.<sup>27</sup> On December 16, 2015, five months after the attack, FBI Director James Comey announced that Abdulazeez was inspired by a “foreign terror organization”<sup>28</sup> thus labeling the attack a terrorist attack. Abdulazeez is thusly representative of the lone wolf.

#### **Psychological**

There are serious questions to Abdulazeez’s mental stability prior to the attack. He was previously diagnosed with mental illness in his early teens and had been on medication throughout high school and college.<sup>29</sup> According to a family representative, Abdulazeez was also abusing sleeping pills, painkillers, marijuana, and alcohol. In addition to treatment for depression, his parents also claimed that he suffered from bipolar disorder and attempted to admit him into rehab for his drug use.<sup>30</sup>

#### **Social**

Socially, Abdulazeez’s relationships were diverse. His parents, although divorced, were an active presence in his life but they appear to have had no remarkable

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<sup>27</sup> Meghan Keneally, "How the Chattanooga Shooting Unfolded," *ABC News*, July 17, 2015, <http://abcnews.go.com/US/chattanooga-shooting-unfolded/story?id=32516133> (accessed December 11, 2015).

<sup>28</sup> Fox News, "Chattanooga shooting a 'terror attack,' FBI Director James Comey says," [http://www.foxnews.com/us/2015/12/16/chattanooga-shooting-terror-attack-fbi-director-james-comey-says.html?intcmp=ob\\_article\\_sidebar\\_video&intcmp=obnetwork](http://www.foxnews.com/us/2015/12/16/chattanooga-shooting-terror-attack-fbi-director-james-comey-says.html?intcmp=ob_article_sidebar_video&intcmp=obnetwork) (accessed December 16, 2015).

<sup>29</sup> Manny Fernandez, Alan Blinder, Eric Schmitt and Richard Pérez-Peña, "In Chattanooga, a Young Man in a Downward Spiral," *The New York Times*, July 20, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/21/us/chattanooga-gunman-wrote-of-suicide-and-martyrdom-official-says.html> (accessed December 11, 2015).

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

positive influence on him. Charming and likeable, he made friends easily but was often associated with an undesirable crowd and active in the local drug scene. In an attempt to remove him from that negative influence, his parents sent him to Jordan several times to stay with his uncle and was there as recently as 2014.<sup>31</sup>

### **Cognitive Capacity**

Abdulazeez's intelligence was above average. He earned an electrical engineering degree from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga in 2012 and subsequently employed as an engineer at the Perry Nuclear Generating Station in North Perry, Ohio, but they terminated his employment after he failed a drug test.<sup>32</sup>

### **Financial Capacity**

Even though he was a college graduate and currently employed, Abdulazeez was reportedly thousands of dollars in debt and planned to file for bankruptcy.<sup>33</sup> He had no difficulty finding jobs but could not keep them. However, his financial hardships did not deter him from being able to procure the necessary weapon and ammunition to carry out his attacks.

### **Demographic-Cultural Factors**

Abdulazeez was a naturalized American citizen, however he was born in Kuwait to Palestinian-Jordanian parents.<sup>34</sup> He migrated to the U.S. with his family in 1996 and became a U.S. citizen in 2003.<sup>35</sup> Despite his ethnic background and Muslim ideology, he fit in easily in the suburbs of Chattanooga, Tennessee. He quickly made friends and there

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.



was no indication his community or social circles ostracized him. Culturally, Abdulazeez was raised in a strict, conservative Muslim home, in which he seemed to rebel. Although his father was earlier on a terrorist watch list for donating money to an organization with possible terrorist ties, he was removed after an F.B.I. investigation.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, no inference can be made that he radicalized his son.

### **Trigger Points**

Upon returning from Jordan in 2014 after a seven month visit, friends stated that Abdulazeez returned a changed man. Now sullen and even more depressed, he was no longer willing to engage in any sort of personal interaction. Abdulazeez voiced his concerns about American policy in the Middle East. This activity placed him at the Interest stage and when his computer files were analyzed after the shootings, he was found to have visited the website of Imam Anwar al-Awlaki and read his writings and blogs, just as Nidal Hasan had done. The trigger point moving Abdulazeez from the Interest to the Adaptation stage is not identifiable, but nonetheless evident. While no information was discovered that indicated that he intended to martyr himself, it did reveal the inner thoughts of a depressed young man in a downward spiral and vulnerable to any negative event to push him to violence.

That negative event occurred in April 2015. While Abdulazeez appeared to be recovering from his depression and had just started a new job, he was arrested for drunk driving. This latest setback threatened the recent modest gains he had made in an attempt to turn his life around and this appears to be the trigger point that thrust him into the

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<sup>36</sup> Fox News, "Chattanooga shooting a 'terror attack,' FBI Director James Comey says," [http://www.foxnews.com/us/2015/12/16/chattanooga-shooting-terror-attack-fbi-director-james-comey-says.html?intcmp=ob\\_article\\_sidebar\\_video&intcmp=obnetwork](http://www.foxnews.com/us/2015/12/16/chattanooga-shooting-terror-attack-fbi-director-james-comey-says.html?intcmp=ob_article_sidebar_video&intcmp=obnetwork) (accessed December 16, 2015).

Action stage. His court date was scheduled for July 30<sup>th</sup>, but Abdulazeez apparently decided to make his attack two weeks earlier and never intended to make his court appearance.

### **Summary**

Abdulazeez's case study reveals how rapidly and unpredictably trigger points can arise to move an individual to the Action stage. Deadlines such as Abdulazeez's court date can serve as an accelerant along the maturation of radical intent. Triggers can be a significant event or a series of smaller events. Both can have drastic implications as seen in this case study. While it appears that Abdulazeez moved relatively slowly along the maturation of radical intent, it was his latest trip to Jordan where he exhibited signs of radicalization. From that point his activities became more in line with the other lone wolf cases, however accelerated and with little chance of deterrence or interdiction.

These case studies provide an opportunity to derive patterns of development and maturation of radical intent which can subsequently be employed to combat future lone wolf threats by better understanding both environmental and personal factors of their origination, development, and finally, intent to act violently. This methodology used in conjunction with the maturation of radical intent model will provide strategic means that law enforcement and homeland security officials can use in tracking, deterring, and interdicting future lone wolf terrorists.

## **CHAPTER 6: AN ANALYTICAL APPROACH TO IDENTIFY; A STRATEGIC MEANS TO INTERDICT**

In December 2015, President Obama expressed the basic problem of interdicting a lone wolf terrorist. He stated, “You don’t always see it, they’re not always communicating publicly, and if you’re not catching what they say publicly then it becomes a challenge.”<sup>1</sup> Using the information derived from the case studies, in conjunction with the maturation of radical intent methodology introduced in Chapter Four, and applying the case studies in Chapter Five, an analytical model is presented that reveals the most advantageous time to identify, deter, and, if necessary, interdicting the lone wolf prior to progressing to the Action stage. This model will address the most challenging aspect of combating the lone wolf, identifying him for possible deterrence or interdiction.

Even though lone wolf attacks seem random and completely unpredictable, this analytical model provides a means to evaluate the stages of maturation of radical intent. The results of the analysis of the case studies adjusts the stages of lone wolf activity (see Figure 1, page 14) into a useful analytical model to be used to identify, monitor, deter, or interdict a lone wolf terrorist. These case studies reveal at each stage there are specific conditions present for identification, deterrence or interdiction. As the lone wolf moves through each stage, the conditions become clearer and collection resources can then be focused to track the lone wolf as he raises his profile, especially as he passes a trigger

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<sup>1</sup> alan.com, “Obama: Stopping Lone Wolf Attacks ‘Becomes a Challenge,’” <http://www.alan.com/2015/12/18/obama-stopping-lone-wolf-attacks-becomes-a-challenge/#> (accessed January 5, 2016).

point. These conditions serve to guide monitoring and collection of information by law enforcement agencies and intelligence communities.

### Identifying the Lone Wolf

Applying the analytical model to the four case studies, it is evident that none of the lone wolves could have been identified in the Interest stage. Even to the people closest to them, an interest in a subject that can be considered subversive could be well-masked by the individual or disregarded by his close associates as either a folly or passing fad. However, in order to deter or interdict a potential lone wolf, he must be identified in the Interest stage or very soon after he passes the trigger point and progresses to the Adaptation stage. The best way for intelligence communities to succeed in this critical endeavor is through monitoring internet and social media activity and educating the American society to report suspicious activities.

### **The Internet and Social Media**

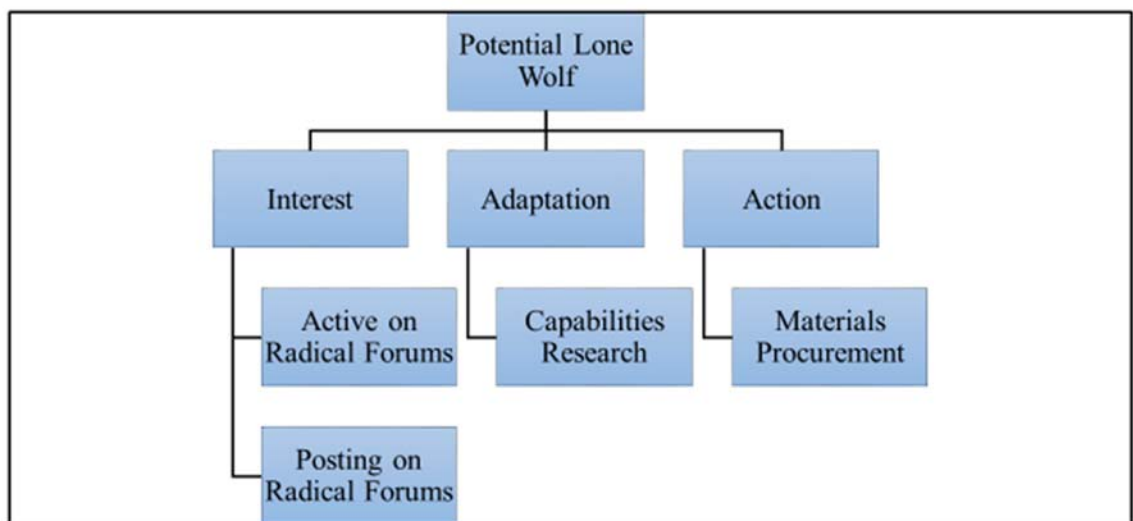
Despite the popular use of the term lone wolf, many of these terrorists are only loners in their offline life but are often very active in their online life. They frequently communicate their radical opinions and views on various forum and discussion boards. As with the four case studies examined previously,<sup>2</sup> Hasan and Abdulazeez were active on the internet and social media. Therefore, the lone wolves that go on to commit a terrorist attack are almost certainly part of online forums, making the internet an extremely important source for finding potential lone wolves.

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<sup>2</sup> The author will argue that although Kaczynski and McVeigh were arrested in 1996 and 1995 respectively, the Internet was not common enough to have been a factor in their radicalization and the first social media site was not launched until 1997, after their arrest.

Using the methodology and analytical model described to categorize the individual, some criteria can be used to refine the activity. If he is visiting or even posting on radical forums, he will be identified and tracked for further activity or other signs of radicalization. If further interest is detected and there is a “capabilities”<sup>3</sup> research observed then consideration should be given that the individual has passed a trigger point and moved out of the Interest stage and into the Adaptation stage and become a potential lone wolf. If the subject continues his internet research and there is evidence that he has procured material to carry out an attack, then he has passed another trigger point and should be considered a lone wolf seeking a target. Figure 2 below shows the relationship of the lone wolf’s internet activity as it corresponds to the maturation of radical intent:

## Internet Pointers of Lone Wolf Activity



**Figure 2. Internet Pointers of Lone Wolf Activity**

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<sup>3</sup> Capabilities research can range from the “Anarchist Cookbook” to search inquiries on how to make homemade explosives or pipe bombs as seen in the southern California shootings in December 2015.

## **No Pack Mentality**

Another manageable solution to identifying a potential lone wolf is through those who are acquainted with him. While close acquaintances can be useful in observing changed behaviors and possible radicalization, there may also be the factor of a family member protecting a loved one from prosecution. Co-workers, neighbors, or casual acquaintances will usually be more willing to report any aberrant behavior observed. The one drawback could possibly be the perception of profiling, whether racial, religious, or otherwise, that might deter a co-worker or a neighbor from reporting suspicious activity. Three of the four case studies reveal that the eventual lone wolf exhibited identifiable signs that he was progressing along the maturation of radical intent. Only Kaczynski operated in complete solitude and offered little to no visibility spikes or raised his profile other than his manifesto which led to his capture. The other three demonstrated visible radicalization indicators that if reported, could have possibly led to interdiction prior to their attack.

## **Deterring or Interdicting the Lone Wolf**

Even though the logic of a process results in an analytical model, such an analysis must concentrate on the relationship between the maturation of radical intent process and counterterrorism strategies to answer the central research question: How can law enforcement and intelligence communities deal with the threat of lone wolf terrorism and the challenge to identify, deter, or interdict individuals acting on their own at the strategic level?

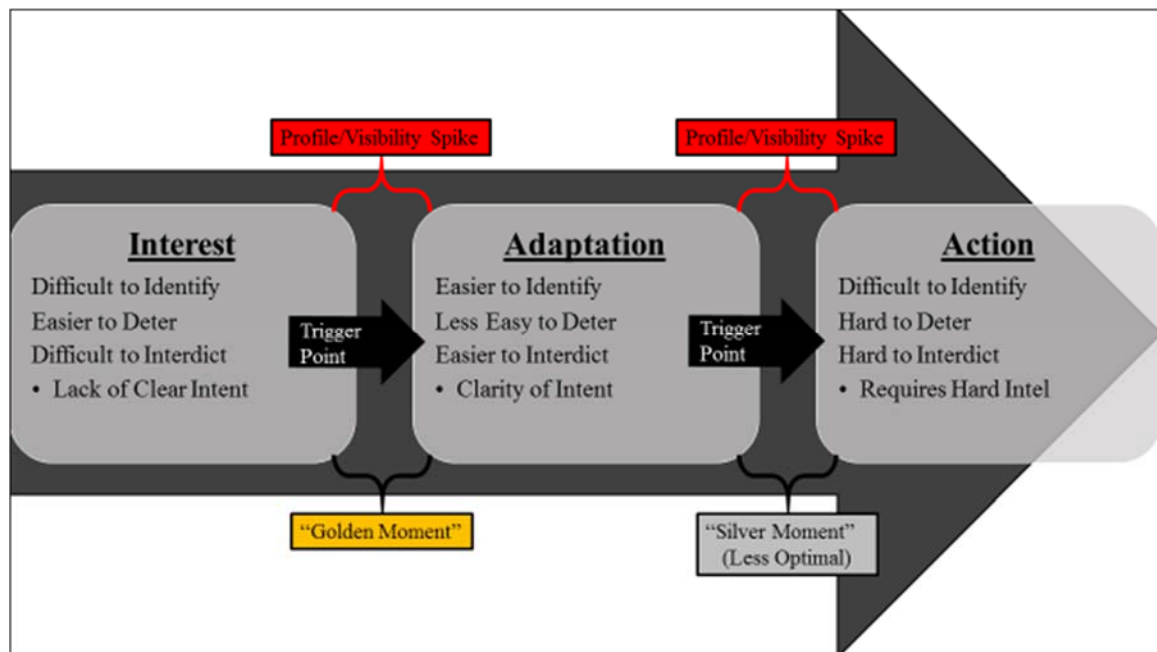
## **The Golden Moment**

One way law enforcement and intelligence communities can deal with lone wolf terrorism is applying the methodology presented in the model in this thesis. If the potential lone wolf is identified in the latter parts of the Interest stage or the initial part of the Adaptation stage, then deterrence or interdiction is very possible. This is the ideal time within the maturation of radical intent that intelligence and law enforcement agencies can focus their efforts to identify, deter, and interdict the lone wolf.

As the case studies indicate, the maturation of radical intent reveals itself often during trigger points. Although trigger points can come in rapid succession as the Abdulazeed case study indicates, the fact that trigger points exist, are visible, and identifiable is significant. Most importantly, however, as the methodology and case studies show, the transition from the Interest to Adaptation stage is the ideal time for action to identify or deter a potential lone wolf. There is likely a profile or visibility spike associated with this transition as the potential lone wolf has experienced a significant trigger event that is moving him along the maturation of radical intent. This profile or visibility spike creates a unique opportunity, a Golden Moment, for the potential lone wolf to be identified, deterred, and interdicted (See Figure 3). The lone wolf has little clarity of intent at this stage and is susceptible to deterrence and interdiction.

If the deterrence and interdiction opportunity is missed at the Golden Moment, a less optimal Silver Moment may present itself between the Adaptation and Action stage. However, interdiction at this less than ideal time will be more problematic as the lone wolf is now either actively seeking, or has already selected a target and he will be alert

and careful in his actions. Deterrence and interdiction will be difficult and will require hard intelligence to anticipate the lone wolf's actions and target prior to the attack.



**Figure 3. Analytic Model using the Golden Moment for Deterrence and Interdiction**

Armed with an understanding of the maturation of radical intent and what key factors will likely be influential to the lone wolf and how trigger points will raise his profile and visibility for detection will better equip law enforcement agencies and intelligence communities to identify, deter, and interdict the lone wolf threat. Fusion centers at the state and local levels working in conjunction with Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTF) coordinated and managed by the FBI offer the best protection of homeland security. Synchronization between these two entities is critical to exploiting the golden moment and if necessary, silver moment, of identification, deterrence, and interdiction. These two windows of opportunity offer the best defense in combating the lone wolf threat. Employing strategic asymmetry as described in the next chapter and utilizing the methodology and model presented in the thesis will further aid homeland security entities in combating this asymmetric threat.



## CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

Negative asymmetry, as introduced in Chapter Two by Steven Metz and Douglas V. Johnson II, whereas an adversary will exploit a weakness or vulnerability to attack, is further explored by Metz in his article *Strategic Asymmetry*.<sup>1</sup> In his article, Metz lays out a blueprint to counter negative asymmetry using a strategic asymmetry, or some sort of difference, to gain an advantage over an adversary. Using the concept of strategic asymmetry, intelligence communities and law enforcement agencies can develop Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTPs) to successfully defend against the lone wolf. The methodology and model presented in this thesis support the four precepts of strategic asymmetry in Metz's article. These precepts are Focused Intelligence, Minimal Vulnerability, Full Dimension Precision, and Integrated Homeland Security.

Utilizing Focused Intelligence, intelligence communities need to refocus collection, analysis, and dissemination efforts of this threat to be more effective. These efforts should focus more on open sources and publicly available information. Understanding the maturation of radical intent and how an individual transits to a threat reveals potential trigger points and areas of investigation to spot a potential lone wolf.

Minimal Vulnerability is not thwarting a potential lone wolf attack, but removing a potential target from consideration. Blunting a lone wolf attack is not always possible, but removing vulnerabilities such as dependence on any single protection measure is worthwhile. Intelligence assets tracking a potential lone wolf observing trigger points presented in this thesis will have a better grasp of the transition to the Action stage and be

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<sup>1</sup> Steven Metz, "Strategic Asymmetry," *Military Review*, July-August 2001, 23-31.

better prepared to deter or interdict the lone wolf as he raises his profile and his vulnerability to interdiction.

The aspect of Full Dimension Precision can be most effective in tracking and monitoring suspected subjects prone to lone wolf activities. Technology allows for much earlier identification in the Interest stage, namely open source intelligence, and deterrence and if necessary, interdiction at several points along the model. Psychological precision allows for deterrence without the potential lone wolf being aware that he is being targeted. This could be an intelligence actor posing as a blogger on a radical forum introducing new, more reasonable ideas to the potential lone wolf in an effort to dissuade him from radicalization.

Additionally, Full Dimension Precision is employed by looking for those tactics that are NOT effective. If a lone wolf is identified and a deterrence or interdiction plan is employed, a desired effect is expected. If that effect is not achieved, then there is a requirement to adjust tactics, employ the action, and evaluate the effects again. This technique narrows the effort and makes the action more specific to the individual lone wolf and subsequently, more effective.

A last recommendation presented by Metz is Integrated Homeland Security. The basic fact that a lone wolf is a single actor and difficult to detect prior to an attack demands strategic asymmetry. Furthermore, modern technology available to the lone wolf has created additional challenges to homeland defense. The fact that he can operate in relative anonymity requires an understanding of the maturation of radical intent methodology. Sharing of information, identifying and anticipating actions that reflect the passing of trigger points, are all key aspects in interdicting a potential lone wolf.

Interagency information sharing and coordination is critical to closing the seams in which a potential lone wolf might slip through, often without his knowledge, as he transitions along the maturation of radical intent. When the potential lone wolf hits a trigger point and his profile is raised and noted by a homeland security agency, it is imperative that information is passed along and shared in order to become actionable against the lone wolf.

The lone wolf is a nontraditional threat with a potential strategic impact. He is difficult to identify, deter, and interdict. The basic privacy rights as guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution create a challenge for intelligence and law enforcement agencies tasked with protecting the homeland. However, armed with new methodologies, models, and approaches such as those presented in this thesis give homeland security agencies additional TTP's and an improved means to be better prepared to operate effectively in this increasingly complex environment.

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## **VITA**

Lieutenant Colonel Holder entered the military in 1982 and received his USAF commission from the United States Air Force Officer Training School in June 1998. He was previously commissioned as a Chief Warrant Officer in the U.S. Army and also previously enlisted in the Georgia Air National Guard as a Medical Service Technician. He has multiple tours in the Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) as a Special Operations Instructor/Evaluator Pilot along with tours in the U.S. Army as an Attack Helicopter Instructor/Instrument Flight Examiner Pilot. Lieutenant Colonel Holder has operational experience in Germany, Kuwait (DESERT SHIELD and SOUTHERN WATCH), the Horn of Africa, Honduras, and Central Africa (FLINTLOCK 09) as well as multiple combat tours in Iraq and Afghanistan (Operations DESERT STORM and ENDURING FREEDOM). His staff experience was as an Air and Space Power Strategist, Checkmate Division (A5XK) at Headquarters Air Force, Washington, D.C. During his last assignment, Lieutenant Colonel Holder served as the commander of the 71<sup>st</sup> Special Operations Squadron, the Air Force's only CV-22 Formal Training Unit that produces mission ready CV-22 Pilots and Special Mission Aviators for AFSOC.